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RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

[on the report of the Second Committee (A/47/719)]

47/188. Establishment of an intergovernmental negotiating committee for the elaboration of an international convention to combat desertification in those countries experiencing serious drought and/or desertification, particularly in Africa

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 44/172 A of 19 December 1989, 44/228 of 22 December 1989 and other relevant General Assembly resolutions, as well as decisions adopted by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, in particular the recommendation by which the Conference invited the General Assembly to establish at its forty-seventh session, under its auspices, an intergovernmental negotiating committee for the elaboration of an international convention to combat desertification in those countries experiencing serious drought and/or desertification, particularly in Africa, with a view to finalizing such a convention by June 1994, 1/

1. Welcomes with satisfaction the results and the recommendations of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, particularly chapter 12 of Agenda 21 entitled "Managing fragile ecosystems: combating desertification and drought"; 2/

1/ Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992 (A/CONF.151/26), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II, para. 12.40.

2/ Ibid., annex II.

2. Decides to establish, under its auspices, an Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for the elaboration of an international convention to combat desertification in those countries experiencing serious drought and/or desertification, particularly in Africa, taking into account proposals that may be submitted by States participating in the negotiating process, with a view to finalizing such a convention by June 1994, and welcomes the candidature of Ambassador Bo Kjellen (Sweden) for the chairmanship of the Committee;

3. Also decides that the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee shall be open to all States Members of the United Nations or members of the specialized agencies, with the participation of observers in accordance with the established practice of the General Assembly;

4. Further decides that the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee shall hold, in addition to an organizational session, five substantive sessions, each lasting for two weeks, at Geneva and Nairobi, in New York and, in accordance with paragraph 5 of General Assembly resolution 40/243 of 18 December 1985, in Paris; the dates of these sessions will be determined by the Committee at its organizational session, subject to review of the timetable at the end of each negotiating session and taking into account the schedule of other related meetings;

5. Decides that at the first session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee, to be held at Nairobi, the first week shall be devoted to the sharing of technical information and assessments, with the involvement of experts, on drought and desertification;

6. Decides that provision shall be made for an organizational session of up to one week's duration, to be held in New York not later than February 1993, in order to organize the work of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee and to elect its officers, which shall consist of a chairman, three vice-chairmen and a rapporteur, each of the five regional groups being represented by one officer;

7. Requests the Secretary-General to establish at Geneva as soon as possible an ad hoc secretariat of appropriate size and calibre, drawing, inter alia, on staff resources of the United Nations system, in order to ensure that the ad hoc secretariat embodies the requisite technical expertise to assist the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee in the fulfilment of its mandate;

8. Invites the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office, the United Nations Environment Programme, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the World Health Organization, the World Meteorological Organization, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and other relevant international organizations dealing with desertification, drought and development, to make appropriate contributions to the work of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee in the fulfilment of its mandate;

9. Decides that the Secretary-General shall appoint as head of the ad hoc secretariat a senior official at an appropriate level who shall act under the guidance of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee;

10. Requests the Secretary-General, through the head of the ad hoc secretariat, to prepare draft rules of procedure to be considered by the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee at its organizational session;

11. Requests the head of the ad hoc secretariat to make available to the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee, at the first substantive session, the most relevant and recent information available, in conformity with its mandate as stated in paragraph 2 above;

12. Decides to establish a multidisciplinary panel of experts to assist the ad hoc secretariat and, under its authority, to provide the necessary expertise in the scientific, technical, legal and other related fields, making full use of the resources and expertise within and available to Governments and/or organizations of the United Nations system dealing with drought and desertification;

13. Also decides that the negotiation process shall be funded through existing United Nations budgetary resources, without negatively affecting its programmed activities, and through voluntary contributions to a trust fund established specifically for that purpose for the duration of the negotiations and administered by the head of the ad hoc secretariat, under the authority of the Secretary-General;

14. Urges Governments, regional economic integration organizations and other interested organizations, including non-governmental organizations, to contribute generously to the trust fund;

15. Decides to establish a special voluntary fund, to be administered by the head of the ad hoc secretariat, under the authority of the Secretary-General, to assist developing countries affected by desertification and drought, in particular the least developed countries, to participate fully and effectively in the negotiation process, and invites Governments, regional economic integration organizations and other interested organizations, including non-governmental organizations, to contribute generously to the fund;

16. Invites relevant or interested organizations, organs, programmes and agencies of the United Nations system and intergovernmental, subregional and regional organizations to participate actively in the work of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee;

17. Urges States to organize, in close collaboration with the regional commissions and national, subregional and regional organizations, activities to support the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee process, with the involvement of the scientific and industrial communities, trade unions, the relevant non-governmental organizations and other interested groups;

18. Invites the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office to assist the countries covered under its mandate in their preparations for and participation in the negotiating process and to mobilize resources for this purpose;

19. Invites all relevant non-governmental organizations and, especially, encourages non-governmental organizations from developing countries to contribute constructively to the success of the negotiating process in accordance with the rules of procedure of the Intergovernmental

Negotiating Committee and taking into account procedures followed in the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development process;

20. Requests the Chairman of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to submit progress reports to the Commission on Sustainable Development and other appropriate bodies;

21. Requests the Secretary-General to bring the present resolution to the attention of all Governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and relevant scientific institutions;

22. Also requests the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session a report on the implementation of the present resolution;

23. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its forty-eighth session a sub-item entitled "Elaboration of an international convention to combat desertification in those countries experiencing serious drought and/or desertification, particularly in Africa" under an item entitled "Implementation of decisions and recommendations of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development".

93rd plenary meeting
22 December 1992